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RANDOM SHOTS.

By

NELSON GOODRIE HUMPHREY.

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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY



Random Shots.

BY

NELSON GOODRICH HUMPHREY,

LE ROY, ILLINOIS.



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PREFACE.

There is only one way to make ideas invariably interesting,—simply tell the truth. Knowing that all people are liable to make mistakes gives me courage, although in weakness, in presenting a few ideas, likes and dislikes. My titlepage, “Random Shots,” is a material benefit to me. As a rule, people in this world pass much like money—for what they are worth on the market. The following verses, except the last two subjects, were written to please myself, which, I believe, is the best way to please others. They were written for personal benefit and pastime, as a relaxation from the cares, duties, and responsibilities of every-day life. I feel confident that if my readers enjoy the reading one-half as well as I did the composing, I shall be perhaps better paid than I deserve. A friend, Mr. A. C. Mayo, of Danville, Ill., urged me to have them published, and, thinking they would certainly do no harm, I consented. “Fruitless Attempt to Analyze Space,” and “The Comet’s Reply to an Atheist” are placed with my collection as a credit and compliment to H. H. Ballard, a Kentucky gentleman and scholar.

NELSON G. HUMPHREY.

LEROY, ILLINOIS, 1884.



SPRING.

SPRING.

The farmers are taking chances,
As they did through sleet and snow.
And the heat of spring advances
To the land where blizzards blow.

And I heard the cattle lowing
On the prairie, stiff and cold;
And the rooster, he was crowing,
But his voice was harsh and old.

And I heard the distant rumbling,
Sounding like an old machine;
'Twas a prairie chicken grumbling,
As the grass was turning green.

And I saw the maidens raking
With their strong and steady arms,
As their kindred friends were taking
Oats to sow upon their farms.

And I saw two wives together
Making soap, and their tongues did use,
Talking there about the weather,
And their neighbors did abuse.

And I saw the butcher driving
For the city's daily need,
Where the flocks and herds are thriving,
And return with greatest speed.

And I saw a bulk of treasure
In a basket—they were eggs;
And a portion went for pleasure,
And the balance go on legs.

But the crops maturing later,
Like the chickens, they must grow,
But the harvest will be greater
If we only reap and sow.

S U C C E S S .

The route to success is open to all,
The braver ones win, where fickle one's fall;
Cause and effect are ever the same,
Up, all my comrades, and work for a name.

To reap a good harvest, sow in good soil;
To gain a good conscience, fear not to toil;
Pass the fault finding to right or left hand,—
Heads stored with knowledge are sure to expand.

To dwarf the spirit of a little child
May leave it lonely, in some dreary wild,
When others more weak in physical force,
Stay close to the track, not losing their course.

It always has been, and always will be
To our advantage, what others can see,
That by their failures, or by their success,
Our burdens through life more lightly will press.

The actions of others regulate life,—
To prove a kind husband, obtain a kind wife;
It is blood and sense, and morals together,
That saves a wreck through all kinds of weather.

Wisdom so often ends in great folly,—
Drunken with wine makes some people jolly;
Others, their eyes full of devils you see,
That skulk as soon as over the spree.

The foolish of earth are those who feel wise,
Are happier often laughing at lies;
Deceit is a game on all stages shown,
It plays its havoc on the young and the grown.

The people of ages far in the past,
No artist is able their image to grasp;
But wild in fancy, some try to explain
Features of Judas, and even of Cain.

Into the future another class go,
Features of angels in Heaven they know;
All bright and shining o'erspread with wings,
Upon the beggars, and even the kings.

Diamonds and jewels are sold for their worth,
Not so with people upon this broad earth;
Quantity often handles the reins,
Quality falters, but carries the brains.

To be but a drone when harvest is near,
This life is too short, for halting and fear;
The longer the route, the swifter the speed,
The harder the task, more nerve do we need.



See the moon at night, dancing on the waves.
While the son of toil sleeps in sweet repose.

REFLECTIONS.

The dreams of childhood, with the facts of age,
Together mingle in my brain to-night;
They are dear old friends, and they press the page,
In simple measure, are reflecting bright.

In the waving wheat is the bread of life,
That will walk about and reflect its use;
But if from the still it will harbor strife,
That its owner kill with its vile abuse.

See the moon at night, dancing on the waves.
While the son of toil sleeps in sweet repose,
Dreaming he is free, though he is a slave,
While the falling dew openeth up the rose.

See the drops of rain glisten in the light,
When the “bow of peace” greets our longing eyes.
Soon the scene is changed,—snow of purest white
Takes the place of rain, and the rainbow dies.

Once a lover true, his sentence was to die
For another’s crime, in his grave was laid;
There a maiden wept for soul on high,
Tears “reflected” bright on the sexton’s spade.

Once a little child dreamed a triple dream;
Dreaming that he woke in the morning light,
Dreamed he went to sleep, dreamed he dreamed a
dream,
While his reason slept through “reflections” bright.

If within the eye objects do “reflect,”
Murderers remain, who are magnified
By the skill of man, all should recollect
Justice will be paid, though the victims died.

In a mirror grand, did a beggar stare
He “reflections” saw. Once a mother’s prize
As he closer drew, saw a lonely pair,
They were twins of grief, in the mirror eyes.

RANDOM SHOTS.

We have truly often wondered
 Why some people are so wise,
When the truth is they have blundered,
 And themselves they have surprised.

Like the pig out on the ocean,
 On a sail ship, all alone,
Was a compass put in motion,
 As he started toward his home.

They tell us of astronomy—
 Of wonders through the skies,
In trade it is economy,
 And they manufacture lies.

And in all the undertakings
 That they cannot take the lead,
They delight in giving rakings
 On the ones they mostly need.

And to those who have befriended them
 In days of greatest grief,
Long ago their friendship ended—
 They are to-day crying thief.

We notice in our history,
When the rocky pass was found,
The Indians knew the mystery,
Though they had no volumes bound.

From hill to hill did telegraph,
On drums their signals giving;
Though some to-day may jeer and laugh,
'Twas true when they were living.

Their children were to them as dear
And wild as game they captured;
Across the rolling prairies
Those hunters were enraptured.

They traced the paths of animals
Where purest springs were flowing;
Some swear that they were cannibals
Because they are so knowing.

TO OUR FALLEN HEROES.

We think of freedom as we meet to-day
In joy and sadness, as in other years;
We think of comrades who have passed away,
Of the wreck of years, of the flood of tears.

In the North and South they are laid to rest—
It is sad to know that so many fell,
In their blue or gray, for they did their best;
And the woe of homes none on earth can tell.

As brooks from the hill unite as they go,
With others more grand, though they pass from sight;
So we think of those that were here below,
For they battled hard for freedom and right.

We see the widows in their silent grief,
And we think of sons that they fondly reared;
But our sympathy is a poor relief,
For their loved and lost who have disappeared.

We see the maidens of those years ago,
Who were promised brides at the groom's return;
But their cheeks are pale, and their steps are slow,
For the flush of hope can no longer burn.

The orphan children that are left alone—

May the strong of earth lend a listening ear—
May we think of them as we do our own,
For their sightless sires cannot shed a tear.

And may the angels from the heavenly spheres

Plant choicest flowers where the unknown sleep;
May the Stars and Stripes in the coming years
Be our beacon light as we climb the steep.

THE PHONOGRAPH.

Yes, the wonderful instrument
Appears to have a mind;
On deeds of mercy can be sent
To talk, though deaf and blind.

Music preserved in minor strains,
Perhaps a thousand years;
Sermons profound from lofty brains
Preserved for unborn seers.

Its memory so very nice
Can speak just to the rule,
And imitate a bird precise,
Or bray, just like a mule.

To serenade at midnight hour
Four instruments you need;
All parts to sing, with mighty power,—
Soprano takes the lead.

Suppose stringed instruments are used,
Harsh discords fill the strains;
Musicians then will be abused
Because they lacked the brains.

To bachelors who timid are,
Pray let your thoughts be heard,
Prepare your speech and send it far,—
You dare not take the word.

For words, all know, will beat the pen,
But self should beat the phone,
If courage weak just send it then,
To talk to her alone.

A quick reply she soon will send,
If earnest and sincere,
As you have been, your heart will mend—
To you be just as dear.

UNSEEN POWER.

Millions of worlds, spread out through realms of light,
Move on a mystery of unseen power;
Weak mortals live and wonder at the sight,
All vainly try to comprehend an hour.

The strength of rivers, in the hills unseen,
The red men of the forest well did know
Would bear the light canoe through valleys green,
Along the banks where unseen flowers grow.

Far in a northern land explorers spied
A mammoth well preserved in ice and sleet;
Extinct the unseen power that nobly died,
With frozen heart, that years before did beat.

The unrecorded deed since earth was new,
From genius minds in ancient arts now lost;
Huge blocks of stone, in pyramids so true,
Unknown to modern power at any cost.

It is the unseen steam that drives the car,
The unseen thoughts that move the strongest pen,
The unassuming ones who have, by far,
The stronger hold upon the hearts of men.





Lies a valley, and a stream
Of never ceasing flow.

ONE HOUR.

Near a lofty mountain scene
Of never-fading snow,
Lies a valley, and a stream
Of never ceasing flow.

The day was slowly dying,—
Disappearing in the West,—
The brant and crane were flying,
Their wings were needing rest.

A maiden sat in sadness,
Outside a cottage door;
The flowers bloomed in gladness,
As they had done before.

She saw the waving grasses,
And heard the plowman sing,
While through the mountain passes,
Small birds were on the wing,—

From unending summer days
To cheer a northern home,
With their free and joyous lays,
Until their young were grown.

The mill had ceased its turning;
The stars were shining clear;
The maiden's brain was burning—
She could not shed a tear.

Her lover had departed
Those meadows and those streams,
And left her broken-hearted,—
She saw him then in dreams.

The hope that she had cherished
Returned in joyous tears;
His spirit had not perished
But passed the “wreck of years.”

PROGRESS.

When Noah's Ark was sailing high
Above the mountains, toward the sky,
All living creatures, with mankind,
The greatest show on earth combined.

For forty days the torrents poured,
The lightning flashed, and thunder roared,
Amphibious creatures were not drowned—
They saw the sight and heard the sound.

As Darwin taught, the cannibals
Progressed from Noah's animals,
Until they upright stood to walk,
And taught the parrots how to talk.

If muley cattle, once unknown,
Like mules and many things have grown,
Why be surprised if man alone
“Immortal” is, from zone to zone.

He gazes up unending space
Is proven to a wondering race;
The heathen bows with bended knee,
The world's revolve, he cannot see.

The night is made to sleep and dream,
But time and sense should be our theme;
We boast of modern skill and cost,
Forget the ancient arts now lost.

The color of the rainbow's glow,
Or echoes in the years ago;
The roaring ocean; shedding tear,
To mortal life was just as dear.

Humanity at best is weak,
To-day, through telephones we speak;
We telegraph o'er land and sea,
As God intended it should be.

The "golden rule," for all mankind
Is: "Help the weak and lead the blind;"
Like Darwin, all will be surprised
When from the planet they arise.

The highest monument, sublime,
Must crumble with the wreck of time;
The mysteries beyond shall know,
Prove what we can while here below.

If genius spirits wrapped in clay
Of ancient heroes passed away;
It matters little where our birth,
Or when we journey from the earth.

GOING WEST.

For a little rest on a rainy time,
An Irish story I'll put in rhyme;
'Twas Patrick Lynch who took a notion
For a country trip across the ocean.

He bid old Ireland and his friends good-bye,
And tear-drops slid from many an eye;
And in fifteen days he was 'way out West,
In America; for he thought it best.

It is either “feast or famine” with me,
Was the Irish thought, when he left the sea;
For he oft had heard on the prairie wide,
Was the better place for an Irish bride.

In Illinois he was satisfied;
And upon his legs he took a ride,
For his purse was weak tho' his legs were strong
And upon his lips was an Irish song.

The night drew near as the earth rolled 'round,
As he neared a swamp, when he heard a sound
Of a thousand frogs, to his great surprise;
And the “lightning bugs” were before his eyes.

It was hard to think what for him was best ;
It was four long miles to the town for rest ;
But a colored man, in a cunning way,
Gave poor Pat a bed until break of day.

Patrick, very tired, did not easy wake,
And the colored man in his hand did take
Charcoal pulverized, and from Irish made
To the darkest hue, called him “King of Spades.”

At an early hour Patrick was in town,
Where the hotel clerk met him with a frown ;
“Surely,” Pat replied, “hungry I have grown ;
I am in the West looking for a home.”

“Far in Africa surely you belong ;”
Patrick quick replied, “Truly you are wrong ;”
When he took a look in a mirror wide,
Saying, “How is this for an Irish bride.”

Then the mystery opened up his mind,
That the colored man certainly was blind ;
“When he woke the man a mistake was made,
It was not meself, but the Jack of Spades.”

TRUE VALUE.

Lines on a silver coin 101 years old.

In the hills, beyond the ocean,
At a time to me unknown,
Far from light and earth's commotion,
There my pocket coin was sown.

Foreigners that first did listen
To its ring, pronounced it just;
Foreign eyes that saw it glisten
Years ago, returned to dust.

Hid in pockets, under pillows,
Kings have owned and beggars claimed;
Rocked upon the ocean billows,
Thy identity retained.

Crops have failed and friends have faltered,
True to all thou hast been tried;
Dim thy face that time hath altered,
“Golden Rule” by none denied.

For its worth to other creatures,
Well preserved, this coin shall rest,
As a saint whose peaceful features
Indicate a spirit blest.

L I F E .

To be extreme with friend or foe,
Their inmost yearnings we can never know;
Unless, beyond, our Heavenly Parent
Makes all our lives to each transparent.

Even balanced be, both in deed and mind,
Love, the king of worlds, greater than mankind.
Blessings sown in time from an unknown hand
May forever bloom in a better land.

On earth have been skeptics, from creation,
In every clime of every nation;
From highest learning in our greatest schools,
To the lowest rank of the lowest fools.

As each day brings a difference of thought,
When some people gain what others have sought;
It may have been honor, or may have been wealth;
While some seek pleasure, the others seek health.

The finest features on this broad earth found,
By laws of nature return to the ground;
Except the mummy, in shows to be found,
Whose features will change at Gabriel's sound,—

And those sunken eyes, like lamps without light,
Upon that great day more brilliant and bright
Than when in his youth his parents could see
The end of their race was not yet to be.

It may be, my friends, with you and with me,
Such visions as this our parents can see;
That down in the ages yet to be born
Their features will glide like clouds in a storm,—

Or in the clear weather, upon some still lake,
The sun and water their image will take,
And soon pass away, as all plainly see
That sunrise and sunset never agree.

All eternity to this present time
Draws thoughts from a thinker, grand and sublime,
That yonder in space are worlds yet unseen,
Created from thought by one Mighty King,—

Whose eye comprehends all atoms in space,
Not wrecking a world; each one in its place
Revolving so still to our mortal ears,
His millions of work by us called the spheres.

R E M E M B R A N C E.

When Smith was young and I a boy,
’Twas many years ago,
He owned a stage for all LeRoy—
The older ones well know.

To Bloomington the public went,
Their passage freely paid;
And loads of grain were often sent
Before the rails were laid.

The old state road remains the same,
LeRoy we love as well;
The old school house has changed its name,—
For years ’twas a hotel.

The games we played while there at school,—
Especially “Blackman;”
The boys and girls did act the fool
As often as we ran.

A few have passed to realms of light,—
The unseen angels came
And bore them upward in their flight,—
The other ones remain.

Fathers, mothers, their children sweet,
 Our streets do daily tread;
 Old maids and bachelors we meet,
 Because they never wed.

Those years ago on memory's wall
 Are photographed complete;
 Though far away I hear them call,
 Their happy faces meet.

IMAGINATION.

Kimler, out East, was very mad,
 Humphrey, in town, was very glad—
 That innocent he'd surely been,
 Though Kimler thought it was a sin.

How it happened, I'll quickly state :
 His ledger page was long and great ;
 A balance long before was made—
 Was positive that Kimler paid ;

And Kimler swore, an hour long,
 That Humphrey sure had done him wrong ;
 A reason claimed, to curse and swear,
 Wrinkle his face, his conscience tear.

Though fast asleep, seemed wide awake,
As he supposed did vengeance take
Upon a friend, he thought a foe,
Because his reason did not know.

A lesson grand from this we learn,
For waking hours where'er we turn,
Realities are oft as blind
As Kimler seemed to me unkind.

THE HEATHEN.

Near Africa, so far away,
The traders dwell on Bonny Bay;
In hulks of vessels once so grand,
To shun the fever on the land.

Two hundred miles from Bonny coast,
Of eating human flesh they boast;
In heathen lands they deem it just—
In superstition put their trust.

Where living slaves are often led,
And buried low with masters dead,
And in the quiet hours of night,
In robbing graves they take delight.

Fierce pestilence they drive complete,
By dragging victims through the street;
Then plunge them into water cold,
In that fair land a custom old.

The darkest belt known on the earth,
Where twins are slain at hour of birth;
And mothers, innocent as they,
Are either killed or sent away.

To send them word to make them free,
All Christian nations should agree;
And those who take the news to them
We call the bravest of all men.

THE OLD DRAY MARE.

Twenty-two years ago last February,
The old dray mare appeared
In a meadow, owned by Garee,
By him was kindly reared.

Following on through dust and dew,
Smelling the new mown hay,
A sorrel colt that stronger grew,
Watching the children play.

Through summer's heat and winter's cold
Three years of life was spent
In happiness; but Johnson's gold
A bargain made—she went.

Soon trouble came; her honest sire
Was placed beneath the sod,
Her metal good, she could not tire,
She had no friend, or God.

Around her neck a collar wore
Through winter's coldest night;
The marks of pain upon a sore
Until it turned to white.



THE OLD SUGAR CAMP.

The slaves for life are changing hands,
 Are hauling beer and bread
 In Illinois and other lands,
 And will be till they're dead.

Humanity is much the same,
 So many try to shirk—
 Allow the old, the weak, the lame,
 To do their honest work.

THE OLD SUGAR CAMP.

In western New York, thirty years ago,
 When a youth at home in the sugar camp,
 We drove the sled through the drifted snow,
 Though the wind was chill and the roads were damp.

Where the maple trees, waiting long for spring,
 On them were the scars of the year before,
 On the shining pails birds were on the wing;
 When the auger turned, sap began to pour.

As the spring advanced, nature seemed at best,
 And the sweets below with the sun awoke;
 But the Sabbath day only was for rest,
 And the birds and bees there the silence broke.

Monday morning came, and the work began,
Saving at the camp sap that had not spilled,
As from tree to tree we together ran,
To the long canoe, until it was filled.

Then the fires were built, and the kettles hung,
And the sugar saved for the coming year;
Through the watch at night, we together sung,
With the neighbor girls there to give us cheer.

Soon the moon arose, shining through the trees,
Welcomed to the feast; in the camps around,
Odors from the flowers, passing in the breeze,
Where the snow had been on the frozen ground.

In the modern camps yokes are never seen;
Sap is hauled on sleds,—kettles are not known;
But the olden spots of my youth are green,
Though in Illinois I am left alone.

Of those ancient scenes thousands living know,
Thousands are at rest, thousands soon will be,
Where the winter's blast over them will blow,
And with all the rest kindly think of me.



I pause beside the winding stream,
A flower is borne away.

A WALK.

From busy scenes of life I stray,
To remote and quiet shade ;
Beneath the lofty oaks, my way,
That the little acorns made.

Unwritten poems here I meet,
The growth of many a year ;
Flowers are growing at my feet,
That I pluck and shed a tear.

I pause beside the winding stream,
A flower is borne away ;
And the lily bows, as in a dream,
As it bids the sun good day.

Immortal themes, I cannot write,
That the soul alone can reach,
Come crowding on my mental sight,
That below is not in speech.

Yearnings, like those who grief have known
When shadows have passed away,
Meditations maturer grown
When the mists have cleared away.

The myriad stars through leafy trees
Looked down, and caught my sight;
And sweet perfumes were in the breeze,
Through that lovely July night.

Far in the east a friend arose—
The moon, with a smiling face,
Reflected on the brook, and 'rose
'Til he found my hiding place.

A voice I heard, it was my own;
“Kind friend,” to the moon I said,
“What scenes by thee on earth are known,
Of the living and the dead.”

AN INDIAN DREAMED.

Where wooden sticks and drums did play,
When the fifes were loud and shrill;
It was on “general muster day,”
Down the valley; up the hill.

It happened in an Eastern state,
Where years before was fighting;
A circumstance of ancient date,
Tradition put in writing.

An Indian chief beheld the sight,
The eagle high was soaring;
Strange scenes; his brain expressed delight—
Artillery was roaring.

Night came, and quiet reigned supreme,
Through camp the moonlight glistened;
The chieftain in a wondrous dream
In wigwam eager listened.

He heard a tramp, a white man spoke:
The choice of all is yours; he went;
He saw the steed, before he woke,
The general to him had sent.

The chief arose, believed it true,
To the general quickly went;
His dream explained of grand review,
And the horse to him was sent.

The general dreamed a mighty dream,
But he dreamed it through the day;
One half a reservation theme,
For the horse he gave away.

The artificial lie, you see,
Like the present thefts was paid;
"White man you dream too hard for me,"
The reply the Indian made.

THE SWITZERS.

A TRUE STORY.

In a valley up a mountain,
Not many years ago,
Lived a widow near a fountain,
Between the peaks of snow.

Three sons were left as recollections
Of one beyond the skies;—
Remnants of her first affections,
Bequeathed from earthly ties.

A hunter was the eldest child,
His face was smooth and fair;
He killed the nimble chamois wild,
High in the Alpine air.

The younger boys did baskets make,
Through the winter weather;
In summer time did berries take
Down the mount together.

In eighteen hundred and seventy-four
The snow fell high and higher;
Their winter store it was no more,
The fuel scarce for fire.

Starvation seemed their last relief.

The stronger two were brave;
They left their mother in her grief,
The weaker ones to save.

The light came stealing where the smoke
Ascended through the day;
The stars shone down when they awoke
To start upon their way.

They fastened snow-hoops on their feet;
Hans Graffle's hut their aim;
The winter blast they dared to meet,
For sake of love and game.

A hearty welcome they received,
Down through his roof they went;
Their wants relieved, were not deceived,
Soon loaded home were sent.

Alas! Vibration in the air
Their joyous cheers had stirred;
An avalanche above the pair,
A rumbling sound was heard.

Hans comprehended, bitter cup!
That they were down below;
The waiting angels bore them up
Through fifty feet of snow.

Instant relief! Hans climbed the steep,
 The mother she was dead;
 The younger child was sleeping sweet,
 Wrapped snugly in his bed.

His little heart did nearly break,
 He told a wondrous dream—
 When half asleep and half awake,
 Loved angels he had seen.

A CYCLONE.

A LAY OF THE TELEPHONE WHEN THE WIRES ARE MIXED.

Will Bloomington friends take warning,
 And be careful what they say;
 I heard a cyclone this morning
 In a most peculiar way.

The telephone bell was ringing
 At LeRoy an hour or so,
 And between the acts was singing,
 But by whom I do not know.

The wires had been on a frolic,
 By crossing each other's way;
 And at Espey's it was colic,
 And the Bloomington Mill to pay.

Hungarian “Boss” came stealing,
The mill is going to repair ;
And at Krum’s a joyous feeling
Was vibrating in the air.

Rob Fell was surely in the game ;
He cried out for miles away
That butter and eggs are still the same.
And “I have enough to-day.”

I called for Evans Brothers,
Thought all Bloomington was high,
As I heard from many others,
But their faces could not spy.

I have heard the geese, in weather
When the clouds rode on the blast,
The confusion altogether
Will compare with what is past.

I surely was stampeded,
As I fled the fearful sound ;
And shall write for what is needed,
Or go up and look around.

PERPETUAL WORKS.

Sixty-eight thousand miles each hour, through space
 The earth is moving in its yearly round ;
 Twenty-five thousand miles each day, with night,
 Producing years, centuries, and ages.
 Springs, Summers, Autumns, Winters,
 Births, deaths, sunshine, darkness, joy, and sorrow,
 Matter animate and inanimate.
 In the train ever changing, are the same,
 Except the spirits as they come and go.
 Spring approaches; the days lengthen out,
 When far in the south the days are shortened.
 In the Arctics' perpetual fields of ice,
 And in the Torrid zone's continual heat,
 Climbing up the mount, from steady weather,
 All seeds, shrubs, plants, and flowers do mature.
 Continual sunshine and brilliant night,
 On verdant valleys, through mighty forests,
 Clouded here and there as the ocean grand,
 The lakes, rivers, brooklets, and even tears
 Mingle together in the moving clouds ;
 With the impure air absorbed by lightning,
 As the pure rain drops fall from the sound
 Of roaring nature, to glad hearts below.

Nature's laws a perpetual mystery.
Humanity now is merely a remnant
Of what has been ; go to the Mother Earth,
Where sightless eyes with frames returned to dust.
Mingle, with forests, cities long destroyed,
The fiercest beasts, the mildest creatures known.
Innocent children, with wrecks of manhood.
The vilest sinner with the just.
The burning mountain threw its vivid light
On terror-stricken souls in vales below,
Buried their cities in burning lava,
Kissing the ocean waves from foreign shores,
Quickly rising in vapor toward the sky,
Fanned by northern winds to tropical climes,
Raising up forests where man never trod,
Where fragrant flowers perpetual grow,
Vast wilds where beasts and birds are almost tame.

ALPHABET RHYMES.

A wonderful treasure.
 By letters in measure.
 Contained in these columns.
 Demanded for volumes.
 Enlarged or receded.
 For writing as needed.
 Great issues expounding.
 High intellects sounding.
 Ink often is fickle.
 Jay Gould's mighty sickle.
 Keeping mum at wholesale.
 Linking chains at retail.
 Mankind is maturing.
 Negations enduring.
 On land and on ocean.
 Preparing commotion.
 Quick sighted endeavors.
 Revolving the levers.
 Strange mysteries pending.
 To thinkers unending.
 Unweary adorers.
 Vain seeking explorers.
 With courage untiring.

Xerxes admiring.
Years spent for the goals.
Zones frozen at poles.

FORTY-EIGHT HOURS IN 1881.

FROM BLOOMINGTON, ILL., TO MOBILE, ALA.

The girls and boys were out sleighing
On the night of which I write;
And their prancing steeds were neighing,
And the owners' hearts were light.

And I heard their joyous singing,
Passing near the hotel door,
Mingled with the sleighbells ringing,
And I thought of days of yore.

On my couch I tried to slumber,
But my thoughts were like a scroll;
Like the ocean waves to number,
Or the pulse that holds the soul.

At an early hour of waking
Took a train, was going south,
Where the darkies love are making—
Near the Mississippi's mouth.

The roaring river soon was crossed—
 At St. Louis changing train—
 Near Iron Mountain we were lost
 In a night of sleet and rain.

Out of the storm we were lucky,
 To a land between extremes;
 At Columbus, in Kentucky,—
 And we passed to better scenes.

In Tennessee the blue birds cheered,
 In the swamps the game was swimming;
 The summer heat we hourly neared,
 And spring work was beginning.

Near broad plantations busy bees
 On beech trees were caressing;
 And various birds were in the breeze,
 Their joyous notes expressing.

And numerous negroes, at their ease,
 Were singing songs together,
 To foreign airs, our ears to please,
 In Mississippi weather.

On Central Mississippi farms
 Were cotton pickers working;
 And others dressed with glittering charms,
 More happy were in shirking.

The harness used upon the farms—
Chain traces and shuck collars—
Rope lines were strung across their arms—
The outfit worth six dollars.

The modest mules did watch us pass,
Their master's shield, in toiling;
Near Corinth sheep were mowing grass,—
The hogs a vale subsoiling.

Two days had passed; on Mobile bay
The oyster shells were breaking;
The ocean steamer, on its way,
For foreign countries making.

Upon the banks I thought of sounds
When cruel war was stealing;
Through blinding tears I saw the mounds,
For others woe was feeling.

MOTION.

The planets roll unending space,
Belong to God's own pleasure;
The growth and life of Adam's race
We vainly try to measure.

By currents strong the ocean tides
Are ever changing on the coast;
Like human thoughts, in lofty strides,
Return to levels, though they boast.

The iron steed, controlled by brains,
High on the mount is on its way;
Low in the valley other trains
Are waiting, as the break of day.

Where Southern birds are building nests,
In fields where grain is growing;
The winter blast is seeking rest,
From Northern ice is blowing.

F A U L T - F I N D I N G .

The world, some say, is going back,—
Perhaps they're honest in their views,—
It may be wisdom that they lack,
And slow have been to read the news.

Complain they do; complain they must,
Obscure from view of those more kind;
Have selfish grown, and none can trust,
Their narrow thoughts have made them blind.

The iron rule of long ago
Made independent people mean;
To bless the multitudes below
More charity to-day is seen.

Within my breast the ebb and flow
Of mortal life is beating time;
To better scenes than here below,
To spheres for making better rhyme.

F A C T S .

To think each second two bodies are dead—
The immortal parts as quickly have fled—
Or in one hour, from a world of strife,
Seventy-two hundred have passed this life.

G R O W T H .

God spoke, the earth revolved in space,
All living creatures made full-grown;
But man alone, first of the race,
In Eden learned he was alone.

Then growth began from Adam's side,
A rib was taken, and its growth
A woman formed, a living bride,
And walking miracles were both.

A growth of sin on earth began,
And jealous Cain took Abel's life;
All down the centuries it ran
To the present time, through tears and strife.

And righteousness spread out to grow
Like arrows, from a quiver bent;
From genius souls we do not know,
Immortal sparks that heaven sent.

The growth of knowledge is sublime,
From nature and experience old.
Its age is not confined to time—
Eternity will it unfold.

The growth of shrubs, with sweet perfume,
That florists guard with tender care;
Or notes in music made to tune
To midnight dream of maiden fair.

Where freedom grew were mighty groans,—
The brave there died where vultures dwell,—
Their monuments are bleaching bones,
And hooting owls their funeral knell.

CALCULATIONS.

Span the earth around with a telegraph,
Date the message sent on its journey round;
Wait minutes five, seconds twelve and one-half.
And the message take as you catch the sound.

IMITATIONS.

A boy came walking up the street,
 He had such wondrous ways;
 A model girl I seemed to meet,
 I oft had watched his plays.

A question flashed into my head,
 Why he so strange appeared;
 A ready answer, silent said,
 By sisters he was reared.

I passed along, a girl I met,
 Her age was only ten;
 She seemed to be all in a fret—
 Appeared like many men.

Her education, from a child,
 Had only been with boys;
 The mystery why girls are wild,
 And make such awful noise.

Two neighbor girls, together raised,
 Are oft the talk in town;
 The handsome one is often praised,
 The homely scarce a noun.

Her ugly face the frowning lad
Passed by with scarce a glance;
To her companion, seeming glad,
If he could get a chance.

The prettiest face in all the place,
The homely creature made:
And in reply, a homely face.
The pretty maid had paid.

A jolly artist thought it wise
To sketch what he had seen:
With valentines did both surprise,
And proved that both were green.



YOUTH.

Between the lofty hills near Buffalo,
Is soil I first beheld that gave me birth ;
A land where speckled trout in brooklets grow,
The brightest spot to me upon the earth.

'Twas in the early spring, the hemlocks grew,
Far up the hill were the beech trees shade,
'Twas there the pigeons came; they truly knew
The woods to rear their young; there the eggs were laid.

And the mill below purest flour made,
And the living wind mingled in the sound,
And the shouting boys in the mill race played,
Near the water-wheel slowly rolling round.

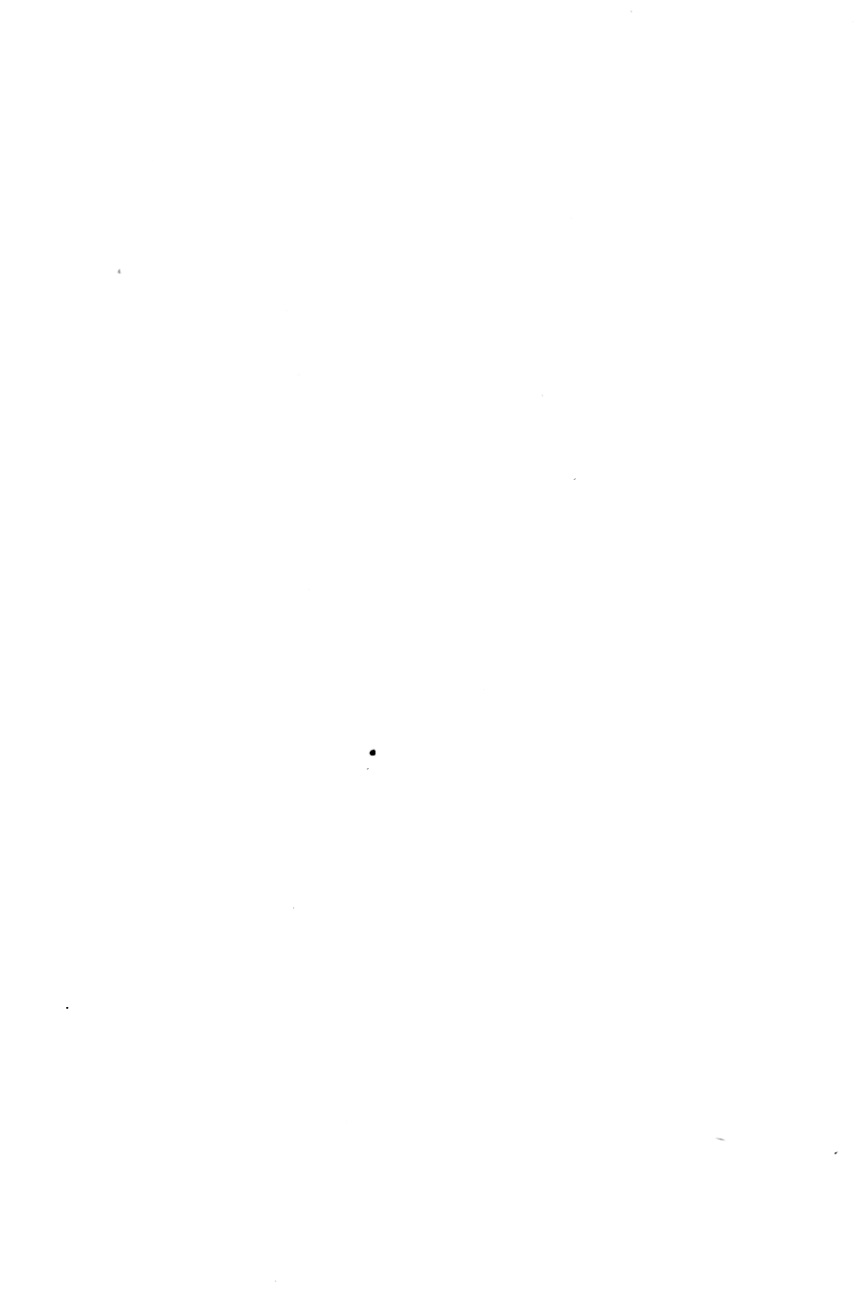
'Twas there I drove the cattle by the week,
Two cents each day as recompense was paid ;
Through summer time barefooted were my feet,
The scars remain the cruel stone-bruise made.

An orchard owned by Deacon Clark,
His melon patch the neighbors thought the best;
The better ones were found, the night was dark,
May Clark forgive, we did not break his rest.

Through six long months the school-house fires were made,
For Guiteau's lawyer, known as Charles H. Reed ;
Three dollars for my winter work he paid—
The ashes went for pins; I was in need.

Far up the hill a group of children went
With hand-sleds painted blue, and white, and red ;
Returning like a cyclone had been sent,
Before the saints in town their prayers had said.

And down below, upon the ice at night,
Were rosy lips and faces smooth as glass,
And their eyes were clear as the stars were bright,
And I loved them all as I saw them pass,





CHRISTMAS CHEER.

CHRISTMAS CHEER.

The roses red, the grasses green,
Are growing south, to-day are seen ;
The birds of flight, that give us cheer,
To other souls are just as dear.

The Esquimaux in fur is dressed,
In hut of ice enjoys his rest ;
The winter blast through forests fly
And here old nature's pipe is high.

The winter wind is drifting snow,
Indoors are stockings in a row ;
The ember glow, the children shout,
Old Santa Claus is surely out.

Twenty-four hours of Christmas morn,
Another day on earth is born ;
Twenty-four hours of Christmas night,
The “Shepherd's Star” reflects its light.

A THRILLING ADVENTURE.

Long years ago, down East, transpired,
A circumstance I now relate ;
My father had a stage-coach hired,
To navigate across the State.

The rain had poured for many an hour,
On Pennsylvania's crooked face ;
At noon they met a lively shower,
The frail old bridge had left its place.

Far up the bank a bridge was found,
Four feet of water o'er it went ;
The driver brave, his whip did sound,
And horses four were on it sent.

Five years before, I came to earth,
The whip on the bridge did sound ;
I think a circumstance of worth
For me, perhaps, had father drowned.

When half across, to their surprise,
The bridge was gone, for many feet ;
Their thoughts were called beyond the skies,
Expecting soon their God to meet.

For half a mile the horses swam
 To a curve the river made ;
 The leaders' hoofs struck on the land,
 When their anxious prayers were paid.

The driver's courage then was known,
 When for thanks, he curses gave ;
 He greater wisdom would have shown
 Giving thanks that he was saved.

A MIDNIGHT SCENE.

The dearest poem I have ever known
 Came to my vision the other night—
 It was from a friend, when I was alone,
 Its cheerful bearings I will try to write.

The inspiration of a midnight dream
 In golden letters was before my eyes ;
 Though the night was dark, light was in the scene,
 And the more I read, greater my surprise.

“Do you remember,” as the poem read,
 “Of a blue-eyed child that the angels took
 To better mansions, that you thought was dead,
 And the words I send, for your little book.”

For a while the golden thread is broken,
Though on earth you know I could not write ;
But I send you this as heaven's token,
Of unending love in a “Land of Light.”

Though on earth I only was a child,
And for many friends drove away the gloom,
In their loving arms, where I often smiled,
I am older now than my little tomb.

Truly I will stand near the “Great White Throne,”
Where there is “no night” patiently will wait,
For my many friends who have older grown,
I shall recognize at the “Golden Gate.”

UNCLE JOHN.

Of Uncle John I wish to write,
Who once was old, but now is young;
His children raised to do the right,
Is my epistle just begun.

His black-eyed wife was sweet eighteen,
Experience her school of life;
And from their history is seen
Effects of honest man and wife.

In youth, his house of logs was made,
A fire-place built for winter's storm;
And falling trees was part his trade,
The oxen drew, to keep them warm.

Kind heaven blessed their little home,
In forty years great changes came;
A dozen children, then, were grown,
And each one had a Bible name.

The neighbors often wondered why
Such goodness and such patience shown;
And when a neighbor chanced to die,
The kindness of his home was known.

A latch, with string, was at his door,
For prison life was there unknown;
And always room for one or more,
The way the family was grown.

But trouble came; the honest sire
Had feeble grown; his locks were white;
His rosy cheeks had lost their fire,
And dim the eyes, that once were bright.

He slowly spoke: "I am alone,
Although in age my heart is light,
In wisdom, truly, I have grown,
Though friends of youth have passed from sight.

He often trembled when he walked,
And much relied upon his cane;
And cheered his children when he talked,
"Just think, beyond, I'm young again."

"My 'specks' and staff I leave below,
In vain you'll try to see my face;
You older, probably, will grow,
And need them on the old home place."

That night the messenger was sent
To relieve the old man's pain;
He did not die, but only went
An eternal youth to gain.



Upon his farm, high on a mound,
A thousand monuments are seen ;
Where in his youth his axe did sound,
But now above him grass is green.

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

A silent friend's electric eye,
To a light-house for the world;
High on a rock where eagles fly,
With the stars and stripes unfurled.

A sailor stood one stormy night,
At the pilot wheel in fear;
For on the cliff he saw the light
That to him was very dear.

For twelve long hours, a thousand hearts
On the ship had been distressed,
At the thunder's roar and lightning darts,
That pierced the ocean's breast.

Full forty feet the waves piled up,
And it seemed the ship did fly;
Returning down into the cup,
And it seemed they all must die.

The miser sat with checks for gold,
 Stowed away at his command ;
The fighting man was not as bold
 As a coward on the land.

The gambler ceased his game that night,
 And the drunkard cried for ale ;
A maiden nearly died from fright,
 And the sailors old grew pale.

A mother fainted down below,
 And the captain held her child ;
The midnight wind did stronger blow,
 And the little infant smiled.

"Great God is here," the captain said,
 And a thousand hearts were wild,
That just before were almost dead,
 And they kissed the smiling child.

The clouds rode by, the stars shone down,
 And the ocean waves obeyed ;
A thousand souls were in the town,
 That the storm had long delayed.

VARIETIES.

Perpetual day, perpetual birth,
 Perpetual night on the face of the earth;
 Perpetual waking as well as sleep,
 Not only on land but upon the deep.

Volcanic action in the earth is pent,
 From the mountain peak does its fury vent;
 Like a giant strong, in sleep like a child,
 When active and roused his strength is wild.

On memories wall, from those that are dead,
 Achievements we gain from kind words they said;
 Or leaving their names in histories old,
 Bear stronger on earth than vaults filled with gold.

'Tis pleasure to know, on a starlight night,
 Our friends far away behold the same sight;
 That shepherds beheld from Bethlehem's height,
 That millions since born have viewed with delight.

The water we drink, bounding through each heart,
 In the midnight storm soon will take a part;
 And the water now, in the fish and eel,
 At some future time in our pulse can feel.

Of all the colors of races on earth,
The laws of nature produce them from birth;
While all the languages, all the world 'round,
Produce the same thoughts, but not the same sound.

Beneath the keyboards of instruments grand
Is silent music, unknown in this land;
But active thinking will be heard at last,
From the master minds, as in days of past.

Emblems of purity, snowflakes falling,
The children young to their windows calling;
In tropical climes, up mountains steep,
'The beautiful flowers and snowflakes meet.

As birds from the south return with new song,
The millions of earth should journey along;
To join in chorus all souls to surprise,
As from the planet all nations arise.

To music sweeter than all worlds combined,
Where the deaf can hear, and where none are blind;
Where races and sex can never be known,
Where the old are young, and the young are grown.

EDUCATION.

Two children, I remember,
 Their pedigree the same;
 The eldest in December
 Received his given name.

And Mary, two years later,
 Appeared upon the earth;
 She proved to be the greater,
 Substantial from her birth.

Their parents oft reflected
 O'er paths the children went;
 And neither one neglected
 The task that Heaven sent.

The father told the mother
 Of battles he had fought,
 From school-days to a lover,—
 The loss and gain they brought.

His choice for life, a blessing,
 Her modest ways and looks;
 A monument in dressing,
 To ornament his books.

"Now ornament the children,
As you have polished me,
And you will be a pilgrim,
That older ones will see.

"For children in the cradles
In time will take our place;
And gold, as well as ladles,
Will ornament the race."

With courage of a lion,
As harmless as a dove,
She traveled on to Zion,
Their home was filled with love.

For years a home of pleasure,
At last a cloud arose,
'Twas on a day of leisure,
A thorn to kill a rose.

A naughty little fellow,
Whose mother early died,
Was educated mellow,
Had to her William lied.

And to her little treasure
A yellow book he gave,
It was his daily pleasure
To educate a knave.

“Circumstantial evidence,”
The mother calmly said,
“Will not gain a pound or pence,
Or feed a beggar dead.”

Diamonds placed upon a crown,
Oft are lost in using;
Paths to wealth and much renown,
Lost by heedless choosing.

In the prisons can be found
Rigid faces, blighted;
That their education's bound,
Who their chances slighted.

Capable in younger days,
To break the lion's jaw;
Tan his hide and mend his ways,
And make him gee or haw.

Bill and Mary now are grown,
Integrity and truth;
And their fame is widely known,
Decided from their youth.

OBSERVATIONS.

In observations take a stroll,
To figure out our daily need;
For many parts are in a whole,
And strange are ways of men, indeed.

The little fishes in the deep,
Are soon forgotten in their home;
When resting on their oars in sleep,
Are swallowed by the larger grown.

Self-interest is a righteous law,
How far from truth so many swerve;
In others good, they pick a flaw,
In trade or politics, observe.

“A thief to catch a thief,” ’tis said,
Tradition handed down to us;
For years the speaker has been dead,
But does the saying make it just?

Proclaiming long in lofty strains,
That “none are honest on the earth;”
A sorry time for men of brains,
Responsible for greater worth.

Because another person steals,
 And scienced is in telling lies;
 Is that a proof he better feels
 That honest men he should despise?

Adulterations bring to grief
 The honest men o'er all the land;
 By filling pockets of the thief,
 That few do fully understand.

To boldly step upon the round
 Of any ladder, solid made,
 And worry not about the ground,
 But prop it toward the upper grade.

Shoemakers watch the passing feet,
 The merchant buys to please his trade;
 The debtors pass across the street,
 Because the old bills are not paid.

The sharper watches for a trade,
 Upon the track misfortune went;
 And where the doctor visits paid,
 The undertaker's thoughts were bent.

In board of trade how many swear,
 Because they lost all their wealth;
 In age are left in deep despair,
 From loss of earnings, in their health.

A tombstone man I met to-day,
Inquiring of the rich that died;
And of my health he much did say,
I think he thought I soon would ride.

I had a notion then and there,
To call for samples in his books;
And save a contract, and a prayer,
His sympathy and purchased looks.

I've watched my schoolmates all along,
And those I love more than the rest;
Have cheerful been, and full of song,
And always tried to do their best.

You might as well attempt to hold,
The ocean current in your hand;
As try to prison up the soul,
Of any independent man.

The women, as a rule, are kind,—
That is, as far as I have heard,—
Although they talk their husbands blind,
Victorious, by the last word.

I oft have thought that those succeed
Who have the grit to hold their own;
And if to fight there is a need,
The muscles used are stronger grown.

The foolish man to the lobby hires;
 The solid man his actions spurn;
 The barking dog does sooner tire;
 The seasoned wood does quicker burn.

Each man, 'tis said, “he has his price,”
 Pray tell me how such knowledge known?
 Such persons are too over-nice,
 Their better light has dimmer grown.

Locality has much to mould,
 With thoughts and actions here below,
 For murderers have often told
 That crimes, like goodness, had to grow.

We make decisions often blind,
 One-half the proof was only heard;
 Is that the plan, the Master kind,
 Decisions made, from out his word?

The fleetest horse upon the track,
 Is often beaten in the race,
 His driver did the wisdom lack
 And science took the winning place.

Of education we must write
 If politics decide our fate;
 The independent vote is right
 Of all the votes, small or great.

To force the scholars in our schools
In politics to please our mind,
Is proof the parents all are fools—
Our constitution is unkind.

If reformations only thrive,
As multitudes are wiser grown,
And politics are kept alive
By seed unto the masses sown,

Then let us quickly understand,
That lofty themes should be our aim,
Upon the sea or on the land,
And peace and harmony obtain.

Indelible should be our ink,
Decision as we go along ;
If benefits we cannot think,
Depend upon some honest song.

But, if you wish to test a friend,
Be broken up a year or so ;
In wealth you cannot sure depend,
But in adversity will know.

At twenty years we oft are wise,
At thirty, just beginning to learn,
At forty, folly does surprise,
At death, for knowledge mostly yearn.

FRUITLESS ATTEMPT TO ANALYZE SPACE.

What is that subtile element, that we
 Call magnetism, yet have never seen or
 Heard? and so far as we can tell, pervades
 All space? Can it be that space itself is
 Held together by its bond? Is not the
 Air invisible composed of parts? And
 Are they not material? And when in
 Mass sufficient gathered, by some force not
 In themselves, successfully attack the
 Strongest fabrics man has built upon the earth.

Did not Newtonian skill unravel
 Light's soft skein, when any man before would
 Just as soon have thought that space was made of
 Parts as Light? Can anything without its
 Parts exist, of which the whole is more than some?

Is not eternity itself made
 Up of moments that will never cease to
 Follow each? And if they did, then where would
 Be eternity, if moments there were
 Not enough to fill it out, and make it last?

And if extension not, then space would
Die, for want of continuity at
Once. But now it lives, and certainly must
Have a soul—essential being of some kind. And may
Not magnetism be
That soul, and keep the universe alive
By furnishing it space in which to be?

Give me a cup to hold the drops that make
The sea, and I will then annihilate
The ocean vast, and empty out her trough.
Infinites crowd on us here; but this
Mends not the case: No chain without its links.
And where would be infinity, if parts were not?

If not one day can be without
Its parts, much less infinity; for much
Is more than little. It matters not how
Small a thing may be, it's still a part, of
Which the half is less than all. Now let's stop.

THE COMET'S REPLY TO THE ATHEIST.

IN SEARCH FOR A PLACE WHERE THERE IS NO GOD.

Beyond the glittering worlds of light,
For ages past, I've been employed;
And in my vast and rapid flight,
Have found no place of God devoid.

I've soared around the burning sun,
And gazed where mortals never dare;
And in the journey I have run,
Have always found that God was there.

With piercing vision I have gazed
Among the scattered worlds afar,
And where their brilliant splendors blazed,
Have ever found that God was there.

I've plowed the fields of liquid space,
And scanned the ocean, earth and air;
But never found the smallest place,
But what Almighty God was there.

Creation's grandeur I've surveyed,
And seen its riches stored abroad,
But far beyond where thought has strayed,
The ample space was filled with God.

In all that vast unmeasured round,
Through which my piercing view I dart,
No place without a God I've found,
Except the atheist's wretched heart.

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